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Library Trustees Minutes 12-13-2006

Robbins Library Board of Trustees
December 13, 2006

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM. Attending were trustees David Castiglioni, Patricia Deal, Katharine Fennelly, Frank Murphy, Joyce Radochia and Susan Ruderman. Barbara Muldoon was absent. Also attending were library director Maryellen Loud and assistant director Cynthia Diminture.

Communications

Ms. Ruderman presented a note from Ophelia Dahl of Partners in Health thanking the Board for the trust fund donation. This had been made in lieu of a speaker honorarium for Serena Koenig, MD, who had spoken at a library program in conjunction with the community read of "Mountains Beyond Mountains". Ms. Deal read from a note received from author and book critic Gail Caldwell, thanking the trustees for hosting her at their semi-annual author program. Ms. Ruderman, Ms. Fennelly and Mr. Murphy reported on the staff holiday luncheon that took place on Monday, December 11th. The staff really enjoyed the gathering. Claire Anderson of the Circulation Department was honored for her twenty years of employment.

Director's Report

Ms. Loud distributed copies of the final October 2006 (preliminary report at the November meeting) and the November 2006 reports and the trustees reviewed them.

State Aid Study Committee

Mr. Murphy gave an update on the work of this Board of Library Commissioners committee, of which he is a member. The twenty-five members have held several meetings regarding the pros and cons of the current State Aid program/formula. A timeline for changing/updating this program has been discussed. Even small changes could take two-three years to accomplish. A complete overhaul might take as long as ten years. There are three sub-committees that are working on different aspects of the program. A significant decision about how to decide the local appropriation is being approached. A prior discussion deemed that it would be desirable to explore a Trustee Roundtable meeting at Robbins, hosting a to-be-determined number of library trustees from the immediate surrounding municipalities to Arlington. The Massachusetts Library Trustee Association (MLTA) has been urging towns to consider conducting such meetings to enable better information exchange. Mr. Murphy suggested that one timely topic for such as roundtable this spring might be State Aid for Libraries, as per the above discussion. He volunteered to work with Ms. Loud to work out the details.

Fundraising

Ms. Ruderman reported that solicitation letters were recently sent to individuals and local businesses. She feels that the economic and fundraising climate is more positive than last year, so is hopeful for a good response. Ms. Loud reported that some donations have already been received. Ms. Ruderman mentioned a potential strategy for future growth of the donor database.

Friends of the Library Update

Ms. Diminture updated the Board on the work of the Friends of the Library. The antiques appraisal program which had been postponed by Skinner was held on December 7th. All tickets were quickly resold and the audience was enthusiastic about the program with appraiser Stuart Whitehurst. The Friends' next fundraiser will be an April 26th benefit performance of "Carousel" by the Arlington Friends of the Drama. Ticket prices are \$25 for Friends' members and \$30 for the general public. Legislation requiring an insured bartender for distributing wine may cause the pre-performance refreshments to be only non-alcoholic. General admission tickets to this event will be sold beginning in February. The Board of Directors is committed to increasing membership this year. Helen Krikorian will head a Membership sub-committee. The Friends' membership database has been converted from Access to FileMaker. The book sale committee has concluded that they will not conduct a mid-winter book sale this year, but may try a "children's books only" sale in conjunction with a future Russell Fund event. The Friends agreed to provide supplemental funds for equipment for this year's database promotion grant. The funds will purchase a wireless handheld microphone and an electric screen as well as pay for installation, wiring and labor for the new video sound system in the Community Room.

Outline of Annual Report

The consensus of the Board was to continue the previous format for the annual report to be included in the town's comprehensive one. For the shorter version for distribution, Ms. Ruderman suggested patterning ours on one like that of the Newburyport Public Library. This will be discussed in more detail at the next meeting.

Author Program Proposal

Ms. Deal has not yet been able to follow up on a proposal by Haley Booksellers. She will contact them for additional information and report back. Ms. Loud suggested trying one of their programs on an experimental basis.

Policy on Public Display Table

The public display policy was re-visited. The question had been raised about whether display table eligibility was limited to non-profit groups or if an individual who identified with a group should be allowed usage. Comparison of other libraries' policies and an interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights regarding exhibit spaces brought up more discussion questions. The topic will be made an early agenda item for next month's meeting, with additional discussion and action on any desired revisions to the existing policy.

Budget Update

Ms. Loud will meet with the Town Manager next week regarding the proposed budget and will keep trustees informed of the status. A request for funds for a waterproofing project has been submitted as a capital budget item. Another request may need to be deferred to cover this cost.

Other

This year, the School Committee (with Ms. Fennelly as the discussion leader) and the Selectmen (Ms. Loud led the

discussion) participated in book discussions of the Community Read book “Mountains Beyond Mountains”. Ms. Fennelly proposed that, in conjunction with next year’s Community Read, the Board of Trustees hold a similar discussion program. Ms. Loud further suggested that some members of the Board serve on the book selection committee. Ms. Deal and Ms. Ruderman agreed to participate.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM on a motion by Ms. Fennelly; seconded by Mr. Murphy. The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 10, 2007 at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Diminture